

Message Text

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ACTION ITFE-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 VOE-00 SCA-01 ORM-01 SR-02

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P R 170950Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 220

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USUN NEW YORK 568

AMEMBASSY S

WGAPORE 4809

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPR 3397

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREP VN MY

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 3266

1. CONSULAR OFFICER HAS JUST RETURNED FROM PULAU PERHENTIAN REFUGEE CAMP LEAVING BEHIND FOUR OFFICER TEAM TO INTERVIEW AND IDENTIFY REFUGEES MEETING PAROLE CRITERIA. A GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE ON ISLAND HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWING AND AFFORDS REASONABLE AMOUNT OF PRIVACY. REFUGEES HAVE FORMED THEMSELVES INTO FIVE UNITS OF APPROXIMATELY 200 PERSONS EACH AND HAVE ASSIGNED A CAMP NUMBER TO EACH INDIVIDUAL. REFUGEES HAVE ALSO PREPARED A SERIALY NUMBERED MASTER LIST WHICH IS BEING USED AS A CONTROL SHEET TO ENSURE ALL HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD AND OTHER REFUGEES ARE INTERVIEWED. WE ANTICIPATE COMPLETION OF OPERATION BY JUNE 20.

2. TEAM IS BILLETED AT GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE ON MAINLAND APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR TRAVEL TIME FROM ISLAND. MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES FROM MFA, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, AND DISTRICT OFFICE ACCOMPANIED TEAM TO ISLAND BUT ALLOWING FREE HAND.

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THEY ARE COOPERATIVE AND HANDLING TRAVEL EFFICIENTLY

RADIO/TV MALAYSIA TEAM IS ALSO PRESENT BUT PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO COVER CONDITIONS ON ISLAND, NOT THE EMBASSY'S TEAM. WE HAVE NEVERTHELESS PREPARED PRESS GUIDANCE REITERATING USG POLICY ON REFUGEES.

3. CONSULAR OFFICER WAS ABLE TO INSPECT CAMP'S FACILITIES AND FOUND THEM ADEQUATE, PROVIDING REQUIRED SHELTER FROM WEATHER, REASONABLE PRIVACY AND SATISFACTORY SANITATION. CAMP APPARENTLY RUN BY REFUGEES THEMSELVES WITH MALAYSIAN POLICE MAINTAINING SECURITY. LEADERSHIP OF CAMP RESTS WITH SIX REPRESENTATIVES (FIVE MEN, ONE WOMAN) WHICH INCLUDES A CATHOLIC PRIEST, AN ARVN DOCTOR AND A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL, NHA TRANG. THE LATTER APPEARS TO EXEDMISE THE MOST AUTHORITY. FOOD PRIMARILY RICE AND CANNED FISH WITH FRESH FISH SUPPLEMENTS URKKASED DOMLHEI #
RAGERS ON ADJACENT ISLAND. THERE IS ACUTE SHORTAGE OF VEGETABLES. MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES SAID REFUGEES COULD FISH BUT REPRESENTATIVES STATED THEY HAD NO NETS OR OTHER EQUIPMENT. (CONOFF IN DISCUSSION WITH MFA OFFICIAL CONCERNING TIMING OF ELIGIBLE REFUGEE DEPARTURE FROM ISLAND SUGGESTED THAT SINCE IT LIKELY A MONTH OR MORE REQUIRED TO PROCESS REFUGEES THAT GOM CONSIDER PROVIDING NECESSARY FISHING EQUIPMENT.) AS ISLAND HAS ONLY ONE WATER WELL AND THAT CONTAMINATED, FRESH WATER IS OBTAINED FROM NEIGHBORING ISLAND AND FROM MALAYSIAN NAVY VESSEL WHICH HAS A DESALINIZATION PLANT. THERE ARE SEVERAL SMALL GENERATORS WHICH PROVIDE LIMITED AMOUNT ELECTRICITY. MORALE IS GOOD AND REFUGEES APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH. THE DOCTOR ADVISED THERE WERE NO SERIOUS ILLNESSES EXCEPT FOR SKIN RASHES PRIMARILY AMONG THE CHILDREN. VOLLEYBALL AND SWIMMING PROVIDE THE SOLE RELIEF FROM BOREDOM AND SPECULATION OF THEIR FUTURES.

4. OVERALL IMPRESSION OF CAMP IS GOOD. HOW MUCH OF THE CREDIT GOES TO MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES RATHER THAN VIETNAMESE INDUSTRIOUSNESS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT IS APPARENT THOUGH THAT AT LEAST AT THE LOCAL LEVB SYMPATHY LIES WITH THE REFUGEES. EMBASSY TEAM WAS GREETED BY CHEERS AS SOON AS THEIR IDENTITY WAS KNOWN AND THROUGHMCT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE CAMP THE REACTION APPEARED TO BE ONE OF GRATITUDE SUMMED UP BY THE COMMENT OF ONE REFUGEE, "WE ARE GLAD TO SEE YOU."
DILLON

NOTE BY OCT: # AS RECEIVED.

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